

SUMMER  
2003

# Lake Times

J. Strom Thurmond Project, Savannah District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



**Did you  
help build  
Thurmond  
Dam?**

**Know anyone  
who did?**



District: Savannah, Ga.  
Clark Hill Dam and Reservoir  
Date: 6, Dec. 1948  
Serial No. CH272

**CLARK HILL DAM**  
First Stage Concrete Construction  
Looking Northeast

Contractor: Allstates Constr. Inc.  
Contract No. W-09-133-eng-1076  
Contract Date: 28, Nov. 1947  
Source of Funds: Flood Control

## **We need your help** **Thurmond Dam/Lake to celebrate its 50th anniversary next year**

They didn't always call the dam, *Thurmond*. It was Clark Hill Dam before Congress renamed it. Now, the historic structure/lake is approaching 50 years of service to the nation. Next spring the Corps will throw a 50th anniversary celebration at the dam and the public is invited. Special invitees will be the dam builders and Corps employees who made Thurmond Dam a success throughout the years.

Did you help build Thurmond Dam or know someone who did? Did you ever work for the Corps at Thurmond Dam? Do you have pictures of Thurmond Dam construction? If you can answer "YES" to any of these questions, please contact U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Park Ranger Jill Davis at (800) 533-3478.



Photos  
of dam  
construction,  
circa 1948



Generator rotor is removed from unit; new insulation will be installed in rotor as part of the ongoing rehab work.

## Rehabilitation work at power plant will increase generating capacity

Refurbishment of the almost 50-year-old Thurmond Power Plant is proceeding on schedule, with several more years of work ahead before rehab is complete. The end result will be a 31 percent increase in plant capacity (from 308,000 kilowatts to 402,500 kilowatts). This increased capacity will provide more reliable service to the Southeastern Power Administration, which markets the hydropower in the southeast.

The generator rewind contractor, Allstom Power, recently completed the last of the generator work. The new generators have larger copper conductors that will increase efficiency.

"The insulated copper wires used today have less insulation than those used in the original generators," explained Dan Parrott, chief, Civil Works Program and Project Management Branch. "As a result, more copper can be used in the same space, creating more electricity."

Contractor Voith Siemens has completed installation of three new Auto-Venting Turbines in the power plant. These new, efficient turbines will improve the dissolved oxygen levels in the water released into the river below Thurmond Dam. The oxygenated water will produce healthier fish populations during the summer and fall.

The estimated \$70 million refurbishment of the seven huge hydropower generating units is expected to be finished in January 2006. The Thurmond power plant rehab work should extend the life of the generating units by 35 years.

## Be a positive role model for your



**PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE/Class V/ U.S. Coast Guard approved.**



**INFLATED PFD. This contains a CO<sub>2</sub> cartridge that inflates the device when a cord is pulled.**

### Closings, etc.

**Day-use area closings.** West Dam Park will close for the winter season Oct. 31. All other day-use areas, except for the Deer Run portion of Lake Springs, will close Oct. 16. All boat ramps in major day-use areas will remain open year round unless low water levels necessitate their closure.

**Camping park closures.** Big Hart, Broad River, Ridge Road, Mount Carmel, Hawe Creek, and Hesters Ferry parks will close for the winter season Sept. 28. Raysville, Winfield, and Modoc Parks will close Oct. 30. Petersburg Park is open year-round.

**Scotts Ferry repaving.** Work crews are repaving the mile-long road into this popular boat ramp area. Until the work is finished, visitors should use boat launching facilities at the nearby Clarks Hill Day-Use Area. The Scotts Ferry boat ramp area is scheduled to reopen Sept. 10.

**Bartram Trail construction.** Construction began Aug. 11 on eight miles of hike and bike trails stretching from West Dam Park to Petersburg Park. Completion date for the trail work is Sept. 30.



# children: Wear your life jacket when you're on the lake

Put a kid in just about any life jacket, life vest, or Personal Floatation Device (PFD) and the kid still looks good; more important, the parents are assured of their child's safety. But what about Mom and Dad's safety in the boat? Adults should wear a PFD for the same reason as the kids. PFDs keep boaters from drowning.

Most parents want to serve as a positive role model for their children. Children learn from parental example to brush their teeth daily, wear a seat belt in the car, look both ways before crossing the street, etc. But wearing a PFD in the boat is not usually one of those practices children learned by example.

Adult boaters often complain that wearing a PFD is

too hot or too restrictive. Other adults choose not to wear this lifesaving equipment because it simply doesn't look "cool." These reasons are not sufficient to warrant compromising safety.

Today's PFDs are more comfortable and more technologically advanced than those sold only 20 years ago. One of the most comfortable PFDs now available is one that automatically inflates itself, when needed, from a relatively small package.

Boaters should purchase a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD that serves their specific needs. There are ample styles to choose from, but the best PFD for a boater is the PFD the boater will actually wear.

## Fish stories

**#1.** The evening of May 22 began calmly enough for **Julius Partlow** as he situated himself in West Dam Park with an ultra-light spinning rod and some Louisiana pink worms. Partlow had intended to use his day off from work to catch "some little perch." Fortunately, a 62.5 lb. flat head catfish did not know of Partlow's plan.

Although the North Augusta native was quite proud of the 20 lb. striper he had caught some time back, it was nothing compared to the big catfish that stressed his 14 lb. test fishing line. After an hour of carefully playing line out and reeling line in, Partlow was able to land the huge fish. He said he intended to get the big fish stuffed until he found out how much the taxidermy would cost. As he left Thurmond Lake with his prized fish, he said he was going to give it to his mother. She would know how to cook it.

According to Georgia fishing records, the record for a flathead catfish is 63 lbs. 8 oz. That specimen was



**Julius Partlow (above) shows off 62.5 lb. flathead catfish, a near-record catch in Georgia. It took Travis Garvin (right) 40 minutes to bag his 33 lb. catfish.**



caught on the Altamaha River in 1998.

**#2.** **Travis Garvin** was doing some bank fishing in Ridge Road Park on July 4 when he hooked a 33-lb. catfish on a 20 lb. test fishing line after a 40-minute fight. The Aiken native was using cut herring for bait as he fished on the bottom with a Carolina rig. Family friend, Conner Rhein, was just as excited as Garvin when the big fish was hauled in. Ten-year-old Conner was quick to point out that it was his brand-new pole that had hooked the goliath fish.

Hold on to that lucky pole!



## **A growing problem** **Four-wheelers Gone Wild**

by Chris Spiller

"Roughing it" through the countryside on a four-wheeler is great fun, and these days, it seems everybody's got one of these sodbusters. A fellow near Thurmond Lake even rides his to the mailbox and lets it idle while he reads the mail. After he sorts through the bills and junk mail, he makes a big loop in his yard and parks it back in his garage. Unfortunately, some riders are taking these fast little machines onto public property, *and that's illegal*.

Here's the rap on the four-wheelers and the reason their use is prohibited on public lands: They are a destructive force, causing negative impacts to the environment, including shoreline erosion, scarring the landscape with hundreds of trails, and harassing the wildlife. The four-wheelers are also highly upsetting to a variety of public land users, who seek out the natural areas for refuge from the hectic pace of everyday life. The last thing a solitude seeker wants to hear or see is a noisy four-wheeler buzzing like a chainsaw as it speeds by in a puff of dust.

Park rangers have increased their patrols and inspections of the public property adjacent to Thurmond Lake because of the severity of the four-wheeler problem here. Please help control this growing problem to ensure that the beautiful public lands at J. Strom Thurmond Lake are preserved for generations to come.

## **Corps park rangers wear many hats**

Visitors to any U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recreation area will see park rangers attending to a wide range of responsibilities. The rangers wear the familiar gray and green uniform synonymous with their profession. Unfortunately, not many people seem to know what park rangers do. Even fewer seem to know much of the history of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or how park rangers fit into the picture.

Park rangers are civilian employees of the Army's Civil Works division, part of the nation's Department of Defense. While the Corps has not always had park rangers, it has been serving the nation for almost 225 years.

The Corps was officially established in 1779, with Gen. George Washington as the first Chief of Engineers. Through the years, the Corps has been tasked by Congress to spearhead programs in areas from national defense and infrastructure to navigation, wildlife management and public recreation. It was the Corps that first surveyed and mapped the western United States, including Yellowstone and Yosemite. The Corps was not yet in the recreation business, so those parks are run by the National Park Service to this day. In the meantime, the Corps concentrated on non-recreation duties such as flood control, water conservation and natural resource management. As recreation areas like those at Thurmond Lake came into existence, recreation management plans were developed, requiring rangers to implement and manage them.

Today's Corps park ranger is trained to deal with a plethora of responsibilities associated with operating water resource projects like Thurmond Lake. Rangers patrol the lake, parks and wildlife areas. They also deal with land management issues, water quality, wildlife habitat enhancement, hunting programs, dock permits, timber management and community education, just to name a few routine tasks. And many of the Corps rangers are part of emergency management teams, which provide emergency response personnel during natural disaster here in the United States as well as overseas.



**Gives presentation on snakes**



**Staffs Visitor Center**



**Presents water safety program  
at boat show**



*By Matt and Lora Heyden*

Everyone knows that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built many dams around the country. But what most folks don't know is that they also built campgrounds on thousand of acres of natural habitat for wildlife that surround the lakes. Designed to be as beautiful as possible, the sites are spread out with wonderful native vegetation left in place. *But wait, it gets better.* Engineers designed these campgrounds as if they might want to stay there, so, as a general rule, the sites are wide, long and level. *Wait, there's more.*

Usually a campground is an afterthought. In the case of most state parks, the campground was built last and generally is away from the major attraction. This means that campers are not on the lake and they generally can't even see the lake. The Corps builds their campgrounds on the lakefront so that boat owners can have their boats at their site. While not all sites are lakefront, most have at least a lake view, which is something that you just can't get in non-Corps campgrounds. *No, I'm not done. It gets better.* Now add modern washrooms with hot water, electric hookups, and you have a wonderful, comfortable stay, usually for under \$20. *But there's still more.*

In our travels we have encountered many state parks that prohibit pets. The Corps uses a logical approach to their pet policy. Simply keep your pet on a short leash and under control and you have the same rights as non pet owners.

Corps campgrounds have changed the way we travel. We have stayed at more than 25 different facilities and have decided that they are always our first choice, and we are willing to change our travel plans in order to enjoy Corps campgrounds. ***They're that good!***

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers campgrounds are easy to find. They are listed in most good campground directories, including AAA. There are at least two books available listing the facilities, and we bought ours online.

We love camping with the Corps!

## *Camping with the Corps of Engineers*

*Matt and Lora Heyden  
have a permanent home  
in Florida but are rarely  
there. They love to camp,  
especially with the Corps!*

# Why is the lake level still high?

Last year, severe drought caused Thurmond Lake levels to drop. This year, the area is suffering from too much rain, which has kept the lake at flood stage ever since November 2002.

The pumpback turbines at Richard B. Russell Lake were designed to conserve lake water and reuse it for power generation. But those turbines are not being used now because inflows have been in excess of normal.

"We don't need to conserve this water when we are actually trying to get water out of the system," said Stan Simpson, Corps hydrologist.

At press time, the elevation at Thurmond Lake was 331.14 feet msl (mean sea level), which is more than a foot above the full pool elevation of 330 ft. msl. All three lakes on the Savannah River are releasing more than normal amounts of water downstream this year; but the water flowing into the lakes has far outweighed each dam's releases.

"Dumping all the flood water at once would cause additional hardships and flooding to river areas downstream," said Simpson. "This extra water is strategically released so as not to compound flooding from rainfall on the lower Savannah River."

UPPER SAVANNAH RIVER BASIN									
PROJECT	Local Inflow			Rainfall			Outflow		
	AVERAGE	2003	% NORMAL	AVERAGE	2003	% NORMAL	AVERAGE	2003	% NORMAL
	(CUBIC FEET/SEC)			(INCHES)			(CUBIC FEET/SEC)		
Hartwell	4655	5360	115	36.51	41.36	113	4163	4371	105
Russell	729	1064	146	29.49	37.99	129	4710	6406	136
Thurmond	5599	6861	123	29.29	37.16	127	8648	11136	129



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Operations Project Manager  
J. Strom Thurmond Resource Office  
Route 1, Box 12,  
Clarks Hill, S.C., 29821